



DS

478

.3

L82

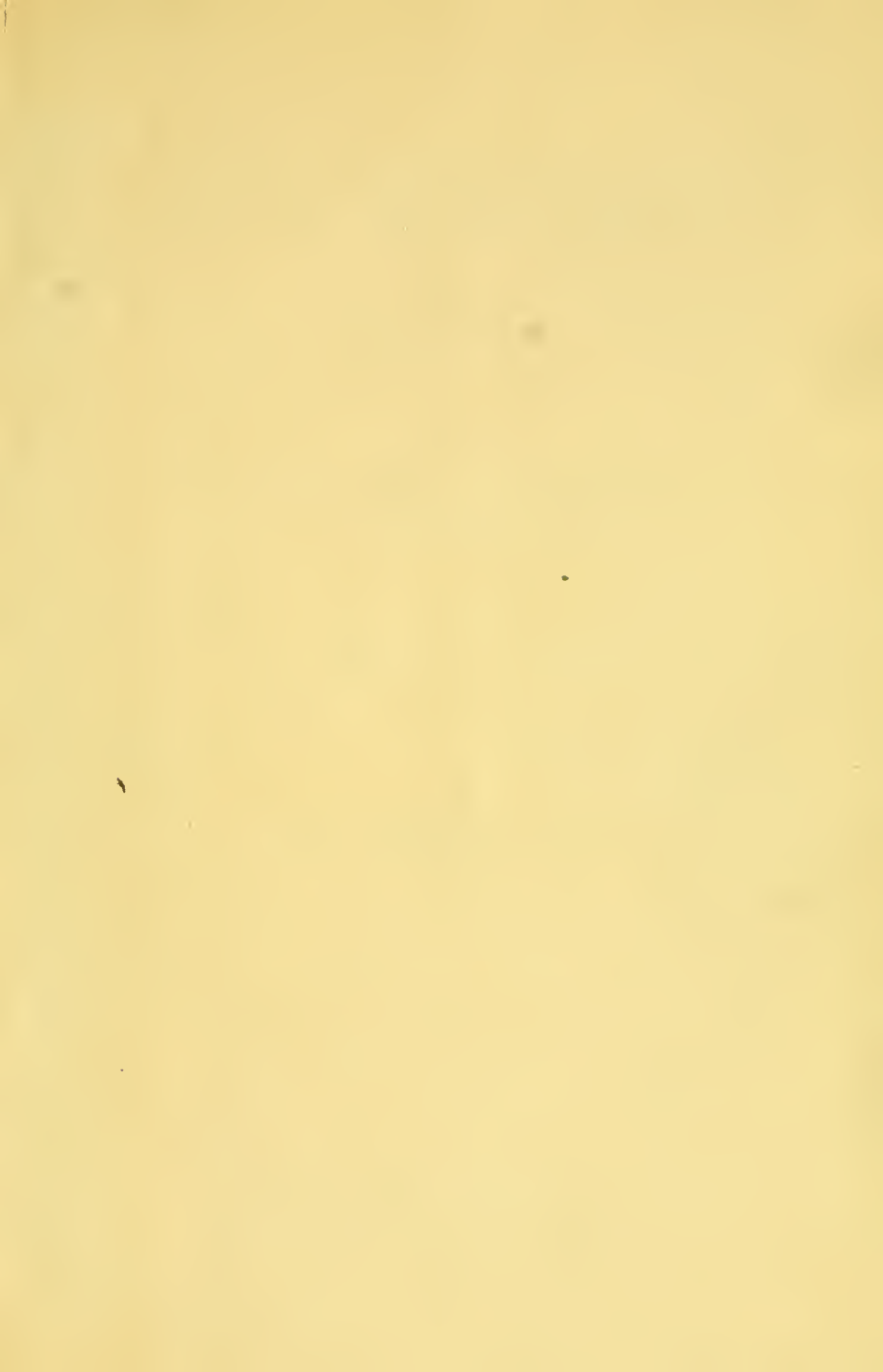


LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

Chap. D8478
3

Shelf L 82

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.





REVOLT OF THE SEPOYS.

REPRINTED FROM THE PRINCETON REVIEW,
JANUARY, 1858.

By Rev I. S. Sewall.

2602
With Additional Notes.

NEW YORK:
PRINTED BY EDWARD O. JENKINS,
No. 26 FRANKFORT STREET.

1858.

200
100
50
25
10
5
2
1

THE REVOLT OF THE SEPOYS.

ART. II.—*The Friend of India*: Serampore, 1857.
The Mofussilite: Agra, 1857.

THE year 1857 will be henceforth known as the year of the Sepoy Revolt. It was the most striking event of the year in the eastern world, and no event of the year in any part of the world has been of deeper interest in the eyes of thoughtful men. This revolt, therefore, with its kindred topics, may well receive our consideration in this Review.

A detailed narrative of this remarkable mutiny will not be expected in our pages. The distressing particulars have filled our newspapers, and though presented in a fragmentary form, have doubtless conveyed a correct general idea of what has taken place. The journals whose titles are given above, may be consulted by those who wish to see how these events appeared to intelligent observers on the ground. *The Friend of India* will be found to contain a weekly record of these events, the more satisfactory, because this journal has the highest reputation for its spirited summaries of news, and its able discussions of all Indian questions.

The British have held their possessions in India by the power of four separate armies: the European, numbering some 30,000 soldiers, who are stationed in detachments in all parts of the country; the Madras army, and the Bombay army, composed of native soldiers under European officers from the ensign upwards, and occupying posts in the south and west of India, in the Presidencies or civil divisions of the country bearing the names respectively of these cities; and the Bengal army that was, having now almost melted away, not before the face of an enemy, but in revolt from its too confiding friends. This army was composed of native soldiers and English officers, like the armies of Madras and Bombay, but en-

rolled as many men as both the others; all three numbering some 250,000. The Bengal army, though chiefly recruited from two districts, and from but a few classes, was stationed in regiments at many places, from Burmah to the borders of Afghanistan, thus occupying the immense country known as north and north-west India. A large portion of this army has risen in open revolt against their officers and the government; nearly as large a portion has been disarmed, through fear of their following the bad example of their comrades; leaving but a few regiments still on duty, and most of these were looked upon with distrust. So vast a revolt of well organized troops has not before occurred in any part of the world.

On the terrible deeds of the Sepoys—their treachery, their murder of their officers, their savage cruelty to helpless women and children, their brutal licentiousness, their setting free the inmates of the prisons—criminals of the deepest dye, their plundering of private property, both of Europeans and their own countrymen—on all this we have no heart to dwell. It makes one of the darkest pages in the history of our race. The mere reading of the details in the newspapers has made men sick at heart and chilled their blood. Alas! the agony of those who had to face this demon-like outbreak, and who fell before its wrath! The awful horrors of this revolt show us the real character of heathenism and Mohammedanism, when the restraints of Providence are taken off. These are the legitimate fruits of a religion, which ranks an unmentionable emblem of lust and a patroness of murder among the deities to be daily worshipped, and of a still fiercer religion which accounts the sword as the best argument.

Before proceeding to consider some of the causes of this revolt, we may advert to the conflicting opinions expressed by different writers concerning its origin and its extent. These opinions are often quite irreconcilable, and they are not seldom set forth with a positive tone that admits of but one reply. Writers, supposed from their position to be competent judges, are to be found on both sides of every question. Undoubtedly this is owing in many cases to simple ignorance, and its presumption is astounding. In cases not a few, it is owing to a

d
reliance being placed on a vague general idea, rather than on thorough study and knowledge of the subject. Let us cite two or three examples, taken from respectable publications. One of our leading daily journals of commerce, in an elaborate argument to prove that the British would have great difficulty in subduing the revolted soldiers, alleged that these soldiers were under the leadership of a commanding mind, and gave as a proof, their having taken possession of some places on the Jumna, in order to have the best advantages for the transmission of troops and military stores; which is about the same thing as to argue that General Jackson would have seized some towns on the Susquehanna for similar purposes, while a navigable river like the Hudson or the Ohio was equally or more within his reach. And a weekly "journal of civilization," published by one of our best known houses, gravely tells its readers of missionaries having bought up native children at two or three rupees apiece, as one of the causes of the insurrection; as if the benevolent labours of tract distributors in the Five Points, in providing homes for a few orphans, could stir up the soldiers on Governor's Island to murder their officers, and then march to Washington to demolish the government. The same journal contains a striking map of India, which places Cawnpore at the junction of the Ganges and Jumna, and Calcutta on a grand Island! Still graver mistakes might be pointed out in some of our religious journals, some of which will be corrected in the sequel of this article.

It is really a difficult matter to acquire a thorough knowledge of the internal state of any country, and especially of a country far distant and Asiatic. Patient and continued study is indispensable. Foreigners seldom learn to appreciate the real state of the case until after many years' observation. These truisms need to be remembered. How justly do we complain of the erroneous representations of many foreign writers concerning our own country, even when we cannot bring against them the charge of prejudice or misrepresentation. Concerning matters in India, as in our own country, there are unhappily too many writers who have published

their opinions to the world after a most superficial acquaintance with the subject. Others, especially in England, have expressed their opinions in the heat of party conflicts, or under the bias of personal prejudice. There have been Europeans in India who were wedded to some theory—very often to the idea, which these Sepoy outrages have for ever exploded, that the Hindus are a mild and nearly perfect people, whose gentle manners ought not to be disturbed by fanatical Christians, and whose venerable institutions ought not to be touched by the profane hand of European rulers. These “Old Indians” are often indignant at the oppression of the Hindus by the British; one of them, a judge of high grade, resigned the service and went home in disgust, because he was not allowed officially to patronize idolatrous processions and kindred abominations. Widely differing from this class is found a host of agitators, who declaim with equal warmth against the oppression of the poor Hindus, because they are not permitted to enjoy all the privileges of their fellow subjects in England, including, we suppose, the right of suffrage and of voting by ballot. Thus extremes ever meet. Some of the foreigners in India personally would in any community be called bad men, and their opinions are after their own image. Others still are weak men, incapable of forming a just or discriminating opinion on any subject; and yet because they have lived in the country, they feel called upon to express oracular opinions, like an old Bombay correspondent of *The Times*, who saw the missionaries at the bottom of all the Sepoy troubles. Letters have been written by others, which were penned under a degree of excitement little short of panic, and the worst side of every incident would naturally be seized by them as true. We can well sympathize with the gloomy feelings of men writing under the shadow of such colossal disasters. Leaving India and landing in England, we find party strife as violent and unscrupulous as in our own country; the misrule of India is a topic as much dwelt upon, and as little understood by many, as our own question of slavery. The *Outs* hope to succeed the *Ins*, by pathetic declamation about the wrongs of the Hindus. An Ellenborough can misuse his

seat in Parliament, to do injury to the party in power, with as little scruple as he used his high office in India to show respect to Hinduism, and to degrade his own religion. Religious newspapers, so called, are sometimes marked by the violence that characterizes political discussions; it is easy to prove from their columns that the government of India by the British has been all wrong and bad from the beginning, and that it never was worse than at the present time. Have we not the same thing nearer home? Who could speak with confidence, a year ago, of the state of things in Kansas? Taking some even of the religious newspapers as authorities, what must foreigners have thought of the character of our government, our people, or our Christianity? It would be an easy but thankless task to quote long columns of apparent facts and forcible arguments, to show that there never was such a misgoverned, oppression-inflicting and oppression-enduring people as ourselves—though we knew it not!

All this notwithstanding, there is ample testimony that is trustworthy concerning India and its vexed questions. Some of the questions in the relations between the Hindus and the British are of a profound nature, and deserve long and earnest study. The expediency of changing the tenure of real estate, so as to vest it in personal ownership, among a people who have from time beyond memory or history looked upon the government as the great proprietor; the collection of government revenue among a people skillful in all the arts of concealment and fraud; the administration of justice among a people radically corrupt, in a country where oaths are without virtue, and human life is of little value—these are subjects not to be disposed of in a few flippant paragraphs of a newspaper leader; and we shall certainly not venture to express an opinion concerning them in this place, though they require to be understood by those who would rightly appreciate the character of the British rule in India. There are other and numerous topics, however, which are directly connected with the Sepoy revolt, concerning which it is quite practicable to form a correct opinion; to some of these we shall now invite the attention of our readers.

We meet at the outset the theory of the Sepoy mutiny which regards its proportions as national and not military. It is a revolution, we have been told, or at the very least an insurrection which embraces large numbers of the people as well as of the soldiers. This opinion has been expressed by persons to whose judgment, if formed in the view of all the facts, much weight should be given. Some of the missionaries in that country, and among them one of the most eminent, have spoken in this way.

The merits of this "national" theory of the revolt may be summarily tested. Suppose it to be true, how long could the few thousands of Europeans stand before all the millions of India? One of the missionaries has well remarked, that the people of India have but to throw their shoes on the foreigners, in order to bury them out of sight! But as this view of the revolt has been earnestly advocated by respectable men, it is entitled to receive a more extended examination.

The common proofs of this opinion, indeed the only proofs of much weight, are two—first, that the people of India have no affection for the British; and next, certain instances of hostile treatment of fugitive Europeans by the natives within the last few months. The latter we esteem as of but little importance. There are villagers enough in India, as in any heathen country, who would plunder defenceless travellers if they dared, and would kill them too, to prevent their telling tales. There are many bad men in most Hindu towns, as in our own large cities, who are ready to hail a time of disturbance as a harvest season to themselves. In the absence of the strong arm of government, the wonder is not that some outrages have been perpetrated by the common people; rather, we have been surprised that the essentially depraved nature of the Hindus has not been displayed in acts of violence more numerous and appalling. We account for the disorder and crime which have been committed by classes distinct from the Sepoys and their rabble followers, on the simple but broad ground of their heathenism.

The main question here concerns the general state of feeling among the natives of India towards their foreign rulers. It

must be conceded, we believe, that there is little affection for the British among their eastern subjects. It seems to be impossible that there should be, until Christianity prevails. The difference of race, of social customs, and of religion, is nowhere more strongly marked than between the white and the coloured inhabitants of this country. The two peoples never meet as families, the tender sympathies of woman in social or pure domestic ties do not bind them together. Not that any repugnance between them exists, as between the white and the coloured inhabitants of our own land; but the causes of separation are general, and such as are not likely to give way until the spirit of the Gospel fuses their hearts in a common mould. Then, we see no reason to suppose that the most intimate relations may not subsist between the native and the European, without loss of social position on either side. There has been, moreover, in far too many instances, an ill-considered, overbearing, and sometimes unmanly treatment of the natives, which has borne its legitimate fruit. There are, besides, certain families and their adherents, connected with former reigning houses, who cherish their "grievance," though they find little sympathy from the masses. And there is the Mohammedan element of the population, sighing for the restoration of Islamism. There are also many whose interests have been injured by serious errors in the legislative or the administrative measures of the government. And there are the poor villagers, who are at times wasted by the march of an army, or the progress of the Governor-General's camp, of whose sufferings Sir Charles Napier takes such just notice; though the cause of their sufferings is not the one which he leaves his correspondent to infer—the oppression of the English powers that be, but the iniquity of the native officials. These native agents refuse to pay over to the villager the price of his grass and barley without large reduction, and at the same time contrive to make it impossible for the poor man to carry his complaint to the "Sahib." This enumeration will nearly exhibit the strength of anti-British feeling in India. And it is worthy of note that in some of these cases, the natives themselves would not expect

to gain anything by a change of rulers. The poor villager would fare worse than he does under the "Company Sahib," as to receiving a just compensation for his services.

On the other side, there are commanding reasons and facts to be considered. The Hindus are a shrewd, sagacious people in all things affecting their personal and pecuniary interests. They can very well appreciate the advantage of living under law, as compared with living under lawless despotism. They are keenly alive to the chances of accumulating property and of its safe possession. It is said the Jews cannot compete with the bazar dealers of Calcutta, though here in Yankee-land they take possession of Chatham street. No people, moreover, are more sensitive than the Hindus to the honour of their families, keeping their females in the strictest seclusion. How could it be otherwise than that such a people would prefer a settled, and in the main equitable government like that of the British, to the state of things which always exists under native or Musalman rulers? The last old king of the Punjab had in his harem hundreds of the most beautiful women in his country, and their number was increased by the forcible addition of every young woman of superior beauty within his reach. If one of his subjects, by industry, skill, or enterprise, acquired some property, he soon learned that his gains must be shared by his rulers, petty and great, until all that remained was not worth contending for. The illustrations are numberless. Now, law reigns in the Punjab, as elsewhere, to the infinite advantage of nine-tenths of the people. The law is imperfectly administered, indeed, and thereby many cases of oppression occur, and many criminals escape deserved punishment. Of this, the people bitterly complain, oftentimes; but they see, what English and American declaimers against the oppressions of the present government do not seem to be aware of, that these cases of abuse of power are nearly always to be laid to the charge of the native officials, or of the state of society where any number of witnesses can be hired in the next bazar for sixpence each, to swear the most solemn oaths. But law imperfectly administered is nevertheless to be preferred to no law, and this the Hindus well understand. We

/

might easily infer, therefore, that if the Hindus do not like the British, they are at least far enough from hating them to such a degree as to wish for their expulsion from the country.

Signal examples can be given to show the true state of native feeling, one of which we will here relate. At one of the missionary stations of our Church in Upper India, a native chief was in power when the missionary first visited his city, which then contained a population of sixteen thousand souls. Soon afterwards the old chief died, and left no heirs. His principality, according to native usage, escheated to the British; if his town had been on the other side of the Sutlej, it would have fallen in like manner to the miserable old king referred to above. British rule was set up, the reign of law commenced, people from neighbouring districts still under native rulers removed to this town, and in a few years its population was numbered at nearly eighty thousand souls. Facts like this confute whole pages of declamation. We shall not pursue the argument as to this matter, but may simply state our conviction, formed after carefully examining the accounts of the recent disturbances, that the Hindus generally have taken but little part in them. The farmers, mechanics, shopkeepers, the industrial classes generally, with Mohammedan exceptions, are not found in the train of the Sepoys. On the contrary, these classes have been plundered in many instances by the revolted troops; and in still more, their daily occupations, and especially the labours of the field, have been so much interrupted, that extreme suffering is to be apprehended as one of the results of the mutiny. It is sad to think that this will be a matter of indifference to these heathen and Mohammedan soldiers; they will care nothing at all for the distress which impending famine will bring on scores of thousands of their countrymen. We trust their Christian rulers may be able to devise some measures for their relief.

Adopting the theory which the foregoing remarks refute, some of the newspapers, both in Ireland and this country, have set the atrocities and brutalities of the revolted soldiers to the account of national hatred, repaying in kind the wrongs inflicted on the Hindus by their present rulers. The theory

on which this atrocious charge is made having no truth to rest upon, the charge itself might be summarily dismissed from court. But it has been made too boldly, to be ignored. It will soon appear that we do not blindly approve of everything in the policy of the British government in the East; nor do we doubt that examples of personal iniquity and wrongdoing in the intercourse of Europeans with the Hindus can be brought forward. But if there is anything in the history of British proceedings in India that gives even a pretext for the allegation in question, it has altogether escaped our reading. Whatever individual cases of license or of violence may be cited—and it would be strange indeed if none should occur among so many thousand Europeans, living in a country where moral restraints are few and weak; (have we not reason to blush for many such in our own land?) it is nevertheless true beyond question, that for nearly a generation past, the policy of the British government in India has been liberal and humane; while the character and conduct of its official agents, in the civil and military services, will bear a very favourable comparison with that of our own countrymen in the same walks of life. We have no sympathy with the tone of disparagement which some have chosen to employ towards a noble people in the time of their reverses; and we repudiate as groundless, nay, as violating one of the holy commandments, the allegation that the Hindus have been merely paying off their debts to the British in their own coin. This charge is in the first place false; and in the next, it is without reason. It assumes that the Sepoys have acted from a sense of national grievance, whereas *they* were never oppressed, never ill-treated, but on the contrary, always dealt with as a favoured and even a petted class; and it is further without reason, because it ignores the real cause of these dreadful atrocities. These have their reason in the unfathomable depths of human depravity, when unrestrained by Divine Providence, and unenlightened by the gospel. It is pure heathenism and pure Islamism that we behold with horror in these Sepoy outrages.*

* Most of our respectable newspapers, while not hesitating to censure some things in the British rule in India, have yet expressed a generous

We leave this painful topic, after adding, that many of the mistakes which are made by those who treat of the causes of the Indian revolt, are made in this same way—by forgetting the real character of the Hindus. They are an ignorant, depraved, and heathen people; and yet both English and American writers speak of them as if they could be governed on the same principles and in the same way as British subjects or American citizens. A greater mistake it would be difficult to make; and our meaning will be clearer to most of our readers, when we say that the coloured people of this country, free and bond, are a hundred-fold better prepared for self-government than are the great mass of the Hindus.

We have dwelt somewhat long on this subject, because of prevalent mistakes concerning it, and chiefly because the measures to be pursued hereafter in India depend on a right view of this point. The statesmen of Great Britain, and the Christian people of every land, must seek to know with reasonable certainty what is the disposition of the natives of India towards their present rulers. The British could not long remain in that country, neither could the work of Christian missions be carried on there much longer, if the masses of the people shared in the spirit which has actuated the revolted Sepoys.*

sympathy with the men of our own race in this unprecedented conflict. What is known as the religious press has been generally marked by candour and truth, in its comments on India affairs. Out of some thirty weekly and monthly religious publications that we have seen regularly, of the Baptist, Methodist, Congregational, Episcopal, Presbyterian, and other denominations, including nearly all of the Old and New School churches, we have observed but two that have taken strong anti-English ground on the Sepoy mutiny. One of these, a monthly Abolitionist journal, is severe in its censures of the British in India; but the justice of its views may be easily tested by its further remarks concerning an oppressed race nearer home, of whom it predicts a similar up-rising.

The flags on the City Hall, the shipping in the harbour, &c., in New York were hoisted at half-mast on the 27th of January, to honor the memory of the illustrious Havelock—a tribute of respect never before paid to a foreign general. It was a striking proof of the deep feeling with which our people have witnessed the conflict in India. Havelock stood in the popular view for the men, women, and children of our race in their unequalled sufferings, and in their triumph over the fiend-like Nana-Sahibs of the Sepoys.

*The mutiny has been ascribed to misgovernment, as its *sole* cause,—to

In the earlier days of the mutiny, it was a frequent charge, that the labours of the missionaries were its immediate, if not its main cause. By their proselyting efforts, and their exposure of the native religious systems, we were told, they had awakened a vindictive feeling among the people, which now sought to quench its rage in blood. Facts and proofs abundant have exploded this theory of the outbreak; and have shown besides, that the missionaries enjoy more of the confidence of the Hindu part of the population, the seven eighths of the whole, than any other class of foreigners. The natives give them the credit of being sincere and good men. As in the days of Schwartz, so it has occurred again, within a few months, that a missionary was able to render essential service to his countrymen in procuring needful supplies, when the officers of government were unable to obtain them. Few of the missionary stations were molested as *missionary*; a native ordained missionary of our Church, and the native teacher, with their church and school, all well known to the dwellers at Jalandar, were allowed to remain in peace, when three regi-

misgovernment as involving the oppression of the natives, and causing widespread distress amongst them. And the example of the ryots, or field-labourers of Bengal, as referred to by the Calcutta missionaries in their Memorial to the government, is brought forward as the proof. There can be no doubt as to the sufferings of the ryots, but it is owing chiefly to their being so largely at the mercy of the zemindars or landholders; and this again is owing to a well-intended but mistaken measure adopted by the government more than half a century ago, the object of which was to create a body of native landed proprietors, who might be expected to feel some interest in the prosperity of the country. But the intense selfishness of the heathen was not taken into the account, and the practical result has been the creation and protection by law of a body of unmitigated despots on a small scale. This great mistake was perceived long ago, and it must be corrected; but it is no easy matter to retrieve such an error in a heathen country, unless indeed the British authorities would act with as little regard to personal rights as would be done by purely Asiatic rulers. The tenure of land in the territories subjected to the East India Company within the last twenty-five years is arranged in a better way; but the subject is one of difficulty.

We think there is some reason for the charge that misgovernment produced the revolt, so far as the Sepoys were concerned; not in their being oppressed, but just the opposite, in their being "spoiled by kindness," and too blindly

ments at that place broke into mutiny. Similar examples occurred at other places. A serious loss of property has befallen the missions of our own and other Churches, and a lamentable loss of missionary lives, as our readers know; but it was as *foreign*, not as missionary, that these calamities overtook them; with some exceptions, particularly as to native Christians who fell into the hands of rebels, among their Mohammedian countrymen. In the parts of the country where missionaries have been longest at work, and most successful, there have been no disturbances; while the Sepoys, of all the Hindus, knew least about missionary instruction. In the ranks, or in cantonments, they were no more accessible to itinerant missionaries, than are the soldiers of our own army to the labours of a street preacher. But no one, we believe, now ascribes this revolt to the missionaries.

The evidence of a Mohammedan conspiracy is supposed by some to be beyond question; and the fears of Hindu high caste people, lest they should violate their peculiar institution by the touch or taste of certain cartridges, are the cause assigned by others. We believe that both of these have been at work. There are large numbers of Mohammedans, who possess sufficient ability, and are swayed by a spirit sufficiently malignant, to devise all that has taken place. But as this sect forms but a fraction of the population, it was only by securing the coöperation of non-Musalman people that anything could be effected. This was to be done in but one way, by exciting

trusted. The oppression endured by other classes of the people had as much to do with the revolt of the Sepoys, as the sufferings of the unemployed in our cities with the Mormon rebellion. In sad truth, we have evils in our own land that are legal, such as the compulsory separation of husbands and wives, parents and children, at the sole will of their fellow-man, too often witnessed in some of our States, notwithstanding the deep grief thereby given to the Christianity of the country,—legalized evils, which it would be hard to surpass by any thing oppressive in the government of India. Compared with these the cases of torture, practised by native officials in the Madras presidency without the knowledge of the European officials, may be regarded as lesser matters; our own shortcomings may teach us lessons of charity towards our neighbors. These torture cases were very justly denounced by the public in India and England, on being brought to light.

their fears of losing caste. The serving out of cartridges for the Minnie rifle, which were made of a new kind of paper, or sized with some suspicious looking substance, became the occasion of the outbreak; so far as the Hindus were concerned, it was to a large extent the cause of their revolt. Trifling as such a cause must seem to us, and therefore by many ridiculed as incredible, to the devout Hindu, especially to a man of high caste, it was a serious cause of alarm; nothing more serious, indeed, could have been presented to his mind. These are the now commonly received theories of the revolt. They both turn on the native army as their hinge of movement. But for this army, embodying large numbers of Mohammedans and high caste Hindus, thoroughly armed, well disciplined, stationed at commanding points, ready, inflammable, and needing but the right torch, no such outburst of fury and ruin could have been produced.

Accessory causes were not wanting. The Bengal army was largely composed of men from classes priding themselves on their high caste and personal dignity; its Ghoorkha and Sikh regiments mostly stood firm in their allegiance to the government, as did the Madras and Bombay armies, which enrolled men of all castes. Not only was the Bengal army chiefly formed from the classes most difficult to be governed, it was also recruited mainly from one part of the country, the provinces of Rohilcund and Oude. This army seems to have been without sufficient discipline, in part owing to the custom which has grown up, of taking the officers of greatest ability and knowledge of the native language for extra-regimental service, leaving the men under the charge of less competent officers. The blunder of strongly fortifying Delhi, and then leaving it in the charge of native troops, and allowing the titular Moghul emperor still to remain in the palace, must be enumerated, and can be accounted for only by calling to remembrance the profound feeling of security which prevailed among all classes of Europeans. Of all places in India, this city is preëminently the seat of royalty; it ought probably to be the political capital of the British; its possession is the visible emblem of sovereignty in the eyes of the people.

For many centuries, under successive dynasties, the country was governed at Delhi. Hence the conspirators at once set up the titular emperor as the ostensible head of their movement, and the Sepoys flocked to that city as by some peculiar instinct. Nor can we pass by the grave fault of keeping this native army out of the reach of Christian influences. We refer not as proof of this to the recent censure inflicted on an officer for his missionary zeal. While no one can doubt the excellence of this gentleman, his peculiar religious views may perhaps have prompted to his engaging in methods of evangelization which few among ourselves would deem proper in an officer of our army. It is certain that other officers, among them the noble Havelock, have been equally zealous and not less publicly known as missionary Christian men, without having met with official rebuke. Our censure falls on the policy that has kept native Christians out of the army, and which even dismissed from active service a respectable man, whose only fault was his becoming a sincere convert to the Christian religion. This occurred forty years ago, but the policy of the government has not yet become more liberal. The dismissal of the Sepoy was a wretched truckling to the prejudices of caste among the soldiers, and it was equally degrading to Europeans, as a practical acknowledgment that their religion was unworthy of respect. This irreligious, or not Christianly religious, policy has resulted in placing the chief defence of all British interests in the hands of those classes of natives who are the most prejudiced, the most proud, the most scornful, alike of their own countrymen and their foreign rulers; and it now seems wonderful that the evil could have been so long tolerated. No considerations of fine stature and bearing in the men, no hope of conciliating such a class of influential people, no mistaken ideas of non-interference with the religions of the country, should have been allowed to have a feather's weight against the sin and the risks of this line of policy. All Christian people will feel thankful that this system has received its death blow in this mutiny.

This native army was the magazine, filled with combustible

materials, and ready for explosion either by a Mohammedan or a Brahman torch; why then keep up this magazine? Thus reasons a correspondent of *The Times*; and the question is often asked, on both sides of the Atlantic, how and why is India held in subjection by its own sons? Is it not better to dispense with the Sepoys? Is it practicable to recruit another native army? These questions may all be answered by simply considering the facts of the case. The Hindus have no feeling, nor any principle, that would prevent their taking service as soldiers for anybody, provided certain personal and caste matters are respected; no idea of patriotism is violated thereby; indeed the idea has little or no existence among them. The reasons for enlisting as soldiers are obvious. It has been customary, under all dynasties, foreign as well as native, for certain classes to be employed in this kind of life, and custom is all-powerful with Hindus. The land, moreover, is full of people, so that it is extremely difficult for vast multitudes to obtain the slenderest means of subsistence. A hard-working boatman or a field-hand can rarely earn two dollars a month, and must find his food and clothing out of that pittance; a house-servant seldom receives more than two or three dollars a month, and "finds himself;" and these labouring classes are hired by the month or day, with no expectation of support from their employers beyond their time of actual work. The Sepoys, besides their military dress and quarters in cantonments, have their four dollars a month, or twice as much as the same men could earn in any other employment; and at the end of a certain term of service they are sure of a pension, which enables them to spend the rest of life like "private gentlemen" amongst their friends. As a class, they are the best conditioned people in India; of all others, they have fared best under the present government—having ample and sure pay and pensions, which were often scanty and ill-paid under native or Moghul rulers.

Almost equally strong are the reasons which induce the British to employ these mercenaries. The climate of the country is extremely injurious to most persons who have been brought up in northern latitudes, and particularly to the

common European soldiers, who are too little governed by laws of reason or temperance. Hence a large pecuniary outlay is necessary to provide suitable quarters for the men, besides the great expense of their conveyance to India—making every English soldier cost as much as would support a dozen of Sepoys; and, after all, he is incapable of much service during a large part of the year. This mutiny commenced at the beginning of the hot season, the time being well chosen, and for three months it was at the risk of health and life for English troops to be moved in order to suppress it. A European regiment cannot be expected to serve long; broken health, numerous casualties, and more than all, the weariness and disgust of a foreigner's life, whose only reason for staying in the country is a pecuniary one, combine to shorten the time of service of English troops, and make it almost a matter of necessity to employ native soldiers, provided they can be taken into service with safety.

On this point little doubt need be felt. With the lessons of the last few months in view, it will be easy to guard against the real danger of a Sepoy force. Soldiers will hereafter be enlisted from several classes, and fewer from the ranks of the Brahmans and Mohammedans. Native Christians will be welcomed. Discipline will be rigidly maintained. A stronger European force will occupy the commanding positions. And thenceforth we may anticipate little trouble from the native army. Eventually the native troops, like their countrymen of all classes, will be a Christian people, and their relations to their officers, as well as those of India to England, will at some future day be adjusted on the principles and the spirit of Christianity. May the day be not far distant!

This mutiny has turned public attention to India, and the relations between that country and Great Britain are now the general study of the western world. It is perceived that the army must be reconstructed, and many believe that the government itself should undergo the same process. There are obviously points of the deepest moment to be considered, if any general change is to be made; and the danger of need-

less or injurious innovation is very serious. It is quite common for English writers to complain of the present government, because the natives of the country are not admitted to a larger share in its administration; some theorizers and some partizans would go so far as to resign the government altogether into native hands, and would have the British to withdraw from the country. To any one acquainted with the state of things, the latter measure will appear as simply a proposal to hand the Hindus over to the evils of anarchy. There is neither virtue nor intelligence among them for self-government, in any proper sense of that word. The government must remain in British hands, and must for a long time be based on the idea of conquest and not of a colony. As to admitting Europeans to reside in India, they could freely do so at any time in the last five and twenty years; but the fierce sun and the drenching rains, the intense tropical climate, added to the already overcrowded condition of every avenue and lane of business in a land teeming with inhabitants, will always stand in the way of European colonization. The idea of colonial government for India will never be practicable. As a conquest, the British must continue to govern the country, if they govern it at all, until, under the transforming power and genial influence of Christianity, the Hindus are prepared to govern themselves. In the mean time, their being subject to an enlightened Protestant power is of the greatest advantage to them. The interests of humanity and of civilization in India, and the door open for the spread of the gospel, alike depend on the connection which has been so strangely ordained by Providence between the British and the Hindus.

The continuance of this relationship we regard as of the highest moment to the people of India; but whether the East India Company should continue to be the organ of British power, is a question not settled. The Board of Control makes this Company in some sense a part of the English home government; but we believe that most matters of administration are left to the Company. Through the Board of Control, the public sentiment of the British people has

been brought to bear on important subjects in the East. The Company itself, being composed of Englishmen, feels the impulse of the national life; and its general course of policy bears witness to the same influences for good, which have governed the councils of its Directors. The abolition of the rite of the Suttee, and of the sacrifice of infant children to the Ganges, the relinquishment to so great an extent of the patronage of heathen temples—a matter sometimes of difficulty because involving questions of vested and personal rights, the impulse given to education, the construction of railroads now in progress, and of telegraph lines now complete, may be cited as examples of progress in the right direction, and of progress under the guidance of public opinion at home. But if we do not misjudge, the original sin of the Company remains. It is no longer a trading Company, but it is still a stockholder's Company; the mercantile spirit still pervades its councils; and its directors would be more than men, if they did not often look rather to the value of their vested property than to the questions of statesmanship involved in the government of such a vast country. We intend to imply no injurious reflections on the directors or stockholders of the Company; they are undoubtedly a body of most respectable persons—probably none are better worthy of confidence; but their Company relationship itself embodies the principle of our objection to them as a governing power. In such hands, the government is likely to be influenced by an English home-class policy, rather than by an Anglo-Indian national one; and a narrow view of public events is likely to be taken. The welfare of the Hindu millions is in danger of being overlooked, if a broad consideration of their interests should involve great pecuniary expenditure. How else can we account for the limited force of European soldiers at the beginning of this revolt? The number was but little greater, we believe, than it was when the rule of the Company did not extend beyond the Sutlej, and did not include the kingdom of Oude. To the same category must be reduced, at least in some degree, the half-and-half measure of employing the officers of the army on non-military service. The vast

cultivation of opium, fostered and extended by a peculiar government monopoly, is a still more signal example of the mercantile spirit of the Company. This great evil could hardly have grown up, if the country had been governed directly by the British people. The crown of England would not in that case have been stained with the fumes of opium smoking in the land of Sinim.* Apart from these things, the Company seems to us a complicated piece of the machinery of government, one in which evils or errors of

* It is but fair to admit that wise and good men are not all agreed as to the opium question. In a note to an able series of letters reprinted from *The Times* on Indian topics, from a gentleman of high social and political position, who is at the same time a warm friend of Christian missions, it is said : "The tax levied upon opium in India, by means of the monopoly, and the tax upon spirituous liquors in this country [England] are based upon the same principle—that of placing the greatest possible check against consumption, by carrying the tax to the highest point at which it can be maintained without encouraging smuggling." On this view of the subject, the government connection with the opium traffic tends to restrict its sale as compared with its extent if the monopoly were overthrown ; in other words, free trade in opium would increase its cultivation.

The rules of political economy, however, are not mathematical axioms, equally true in all nations ; what is expedient in England or America may be pernicious in China or India. But we prefer to look at the opium traffic as necessarily productive of great moral evils. It is greatly worse in its effects upon its victims than the African slave trade. The poor slaves are often, through the merciful providence of God, in bringing good out of evil, placed in better circumstances than they were in before their captivity ; but the victims of opium smoking are debased in mind, body, and estate,—made wretched in this life and miserable in eternity. We can conceive of no good result from this traffic, except in a small degree through the apothecary's scales ; while its evils are gigantic. If ever a case existed in which a Christian government should interpose its power to put down traffic of any kind, this we believe is such a case. We honor the British government for its humane efforts to suppress the slave trade, and we hope soon to honor it for suppressing the cultivation and export of opium.

Contrary to the opinion of our friend, quoted at the beginning of this note, we have the conviction that but for the influence and means of government, in aid of the native cultivators, the growth of the poppy would be very limited in India. It is said with much confidence by well-informed persons, that the opium districts are admirably adapted to the growth of cotton. This should be well considered.

administration can easily be committed, while they cannot be readily corrected, and one that promises no advantage over a simpler form of government, amenable directly to the British crown, like that of the island of Ceylon.

The great question remains to be considered—What place shall be given to Christianity in the policy of government? One thing that all must hope to see is, that the attitude of the government shall hereafter be friendly, and not hostile, to our holy religion. For long years the East India Company threw its vast influence against the Christian religion. A striking example of this has been given already in the removal of the Christian Sepoy from his regiment. The obstacles interposed in the way of missionary efforts were most serious, so that the first English missionaries had to seek refuge in the Danish possessions at Serampore, and the first American missionaries were expelled from the country. The countenance given to some of the idolatrous festivals, the support of certain heathen temples, the presents bestowed on the hideous idol of Jugger-nath, the enforced attendance of Christian officers and troops to salute pagan gods on some occasions, were all positive offences against the God of heaven, which no consideration of worldly policy can justify. The exclusion of the Word of God from government schools rests on a somewhat different footing, not unlike that which tends to the same result in too many of our own public schools. Yet Christian men must contend, that both here and everywhere the first and best of all books should occupy a chief place in the instruction of youth; and at the least, that it should not be excluded by the authority of Christian governors, while the Koran and the Shaster are freely admitted. The practical result of education without Christian influence is shown in lurid colors in the progress of the Sepoy revolt. In this country there can hardly be such education; religion may be formally excluded from the school-room, but, like the atmosphere, its influence is felt in all places, and direct religious instruction is given in other ways to supply the great defect of our public school teaching. It is otherwise in a heathen country, and Nana Sahib and the Nawab of Furrukhabad are the

monsters born of a false religion and nurtured in schools where everything is taught but that which it most concerns the scholar to learn. We have thus stated this matter as it must be viewed by those who are advocates of our own common school system. On the higher and true theory of education we do not here enter. The intervention of government in the education of a heathen people is a difficult subject; neither is the difficulty materially lessened on the "Church and State" theory of education.

It has given us no pleasure to enumerate these errors and grave offences of the government; and we are happy to believe that the worst is over; a more liberal and Christian course would have been followed, even if the great argument of this mutiny had not been thrown into the scale. Hereafter Christian views of duty will not be ignored as to these things. Indeed, for years past, the friends of missions have had little cause of complaint, and many reasons for gratitude in the general course of conduct adopted by the government. But the question remains—What shall be done with Christianity itself? To read the discussions of not a few among ourselves, one might suppose that we had become advocates of enforcing the claims of religion by the authority of the State. The government should be a Christian government, we are told; it should break down caste; it should destroy the Mohammedan mosques. As well might we require our government to destroy the Romanist churches, or break up the religious fooleries of the Shakers. The most we can ask the British government to do as a government, is, not to encourage Heathenism or Mohammedanism, much less to discourage Christianity; to afford equal protection to all; to tolerate no offences against property or life in any; and then, with a fair field before the Church, we have no misgiving as to her success—The Hindus shall become Christians.

This doctrine is not strong enough for our Covenanter friends here at home, nor will it satisfy our Church and State brethren in Great Britain. This is not the time to discuss its truth; but, adverting to the tone of a large part of the public press, it is timely and important for us to lift up a

friendly voice of warning against any attempt to make Christianity a part of the government in India, in any such sense as to lead to the employment or the support by the authorities of agencies for the Christian instruction and conversion of the natives. The sure result of doing so would be to promote a mercenary profession of our holy faith by multitudes who would still be heathen at heart. Let the example of the State support of Christianity in Ceylon by the Dutch be well weighed: the Christian profession of almost all the numerous converts disappeared as soon as the Dutch government was withdrawn, and the large churches were entirely deserted by their former crowds of worshippers. It will be a sad event for the cause of Christ in India, when the government shall take our religion into union with the State, for the native population. On the British theory of this subject, no objection ought to be made to the support of bishops and chaplains for British born people living in India; but it is by no means obvious that the ecclesiastical establishment ought to be much enlarged. There are already three bishops for a population of some fifty thousand, very many of whom are not Episcopalians. It is simply fallacious to speak of the diocese of the Bishop of Calcutta as including all the inhabitants of the Bengal Presidency. The venerable Bishop Wilson has in fact the spiritual oversight of a much smaller number of souls, ministers, and congregations, than are under the supervision of Bishop Potter, of New York. This, however, is ground that we do not wish to travel over.*

* We trust that our English Episcopal friends, if they cannot adopt our Presbyterian views of "the office of a bishop," may nevertheless find increasing need of Episcopal services by reason of the blessing of God upon the missionary work of their Church in India. The growth of their excellent missions is a reason for devout thanksgiving to all Christians. It is of deep moment that in the missions of all denominations of Christians, the measures now adopted should look steadily to the end of placing the whole support and government of the native Church of India eventually in the hands of its own members. And in order to this, it is important to guard against now introducing the *expensive ways* of Western Churches among the Christians of the East. The splendor of an English or Anglo-Indian bishopric would be little suited to the pecuniary means of a purely Hindu diocese.

On the momentous subject of the relations of government to the Christian religion among the natives, we wish to guard against the adoption of *ultra* views. Allowance must be made for the peculiar state of things. Some of the exceptionable relations of the authorities to heathen customs, for instance, result from the fact that the great mass of the people are not Christians. There are certain heathen and Mohammedan festivals universally observed, when it is customary to close the public offices; and it would seem to be useless to keep them open—indeed, impracticable often, because the clerks and laborers would not stay, and to compel them to remain, would be to violate their conviction of duty. Other examples might be given. What we have asked of the government, however, would not fall under the censure of going too far, and would lead to the correction of some great evils. We accord great praise to the British for what they have already done in this matter, in the suppression of thuggism and murders in the name of religion, in the protection of converts from violence and the loss of property, in maintaining the right of widows to re-marry, and in other things of like kind; but it deserves to be considered whether further progress cannot be made in the same direction, so as to render the immoralities and crimes of heathenism more fully amenable to the law. The influence of the government, moreover, can, no doubt, be so wielded as to discourage caste; and this would greatly benefit all classes. Christianity should be placed, at least, on equal footing with other religions in the schools, and native Christians should be eligible equally with others for employment in the public service.* The Lord's day should be observed by all Christian officers

* We learn with high satisfaction that Sir John Lawrence, the able ruler of the Punjab, has for several months opened the door for the employment of native Christians in government service; see the admirable letter of R. Montgomery, Esq. quoted in the *Christian Times* of January 4th. Thus a complete revolution has been already effected in this matter in a large part of the country, and without disturbance or complaint. The unsettled state of so many provinces might have delayed the adoption of this righteous and truly wise measure, if men of less ability and Christian worth had been entrusted with the charge of public affairs in the Punjab.

of government, high and low. Modest as are these requirements of the State, their concession would exert a mighty influence on the people of India. The rest we would leave to the Missionary Church. The Gospel must be the great Reformer of the Hindus.

It is of comparatively little moment what form of organization may be adopted for the army or for the government; neither is it essential to the progress of the gospel in what way the relations of the government to religion may be framed together. We must not rely on human government for the conversion of souls; nor make too much of its protection in the missionary work, as the last few months have shown. We should remember that more depends on the men who administer public affairs, than on the government itself. In this respect the Hindus have reason to be thankful for so many of the best men of England among their present judges, and other civil and military rulers. If the greater number do not themselves act under the solemn impression of religious things, this is but what we complain of in our own country. Who expects the assembling of our members of Congress to do much for the promotion of evangelical religion in the federal city, or in the country at large? It is truly a cause of thankfulness that so many of the English in India are God-fearing men, and that the number of such men, and especially of like-minded women, is on the increase.

In no country in the world is there a nobler sphere for the exercise of all benevolent influences, than is set before our English friends in India—we refer to them now as Christians, and not as servants of the government. Elevated far above the Hindus by their position, and still more by their religion and its blessed civilization, they have daily opportunities of exemplifying the gospel, and of showing that its Author is worthy of universal praise. It is here that the most serious shortcomings of Europeans in India are to be witnessed. The holy life is too often wanting. The licentious natives too often fail to learn lessons of purity. The worth of the soul is too seldom appreciated, the sin of idolatry too rarely set forth. Without specifying particulars,

however, we wish to advert, to the too common tone of feeling manifested by Europeans towards the natives—it is, we fear, far too commonly that of contempt. In saying this, we remember our own sin, and it furnishes the best illustration of our meaning when we say, that the contemptuous feeling which prevails in this country, and especially in our northern States, towards the coloured people, is too much the feeling of Europeans towards the natives. With us, this feeling may be indulged with safety, so far as the vengeance of man is concerned, and this only makes it the more unmanly; but in India nothing could well be more impolitic, as it tends to alienate the multitude from the few, and to hinder the growth of kindly feelings—everywhere so important in the intercourse of life.* Our main objection to this contemptuous spirit, whether shown towards Negroes or Hindus, is that it is unchristian. From this point of view, the hauteur, distance, superciliousness, or even indifference, to say nothing of rude treatment sometimes, which are shown towards the natives, are all censurable as wrong in themselves, and as standing in the way of the great benefits which the governing classes might confer on the people. If animated by some measure of the mind that was in Christ Jesus, a noble destiny is before every European in India. He may hold forth the Word of Life, and confer both temporal and spiritual good on those who are poor indeed, and thus gain the blessing of them that are ready to perish.

We take leave of these things, and return to the Sepoy Revolt, in order to finish this paper in the view of its solemn lessons. The fall of Delhi has been announced, and with this must fall the vain hopes of the Sepoys. There may be local conflicts, and perhaps a scattered or guerilla warfare for a few months, but no general war can be maintained, nor any serious opposition to the re-establishment of the British power. With the exception of Oude, which may remain unsettled for some time, the disturbed districts of the country will soon enjoy repose; the mutiny of the troops will probably subside as rapidly as it burst forth. When the smoke of its fires is

* See NOTES ON INDIA, by the Hon. F. J. SHORE. London, 1837.

cleared away, lamentable losses will be seen, but there will also be found much reason for thanksgiving to the Almighty. These events have had their commission to fulfil, of judgment now, and of mercy in the end. We do not view them as the first incidents in the great conflict between Christianity and Paganism or Mohammedanism, for the possession of India. We do not see in the rage of the Sepoys a general and matured design to expel the Christian religion from the country. Most of the common soldiers were probably governed by their fears of losing caste, by their hopes of gain from plunder, and by the offer of higher wages in the service of "the King of Delhi"—the latter inducements prevailing in the more recent cases of mutiny. The leading spirits in the movement were governed by the purpose of expelling foreigners from the country; and the Mohammedans, among both leaders and others, would no doubt have the further purpose of expelling Christianity at the same time. To this extent the insurrection was anti-Christian, and, of course, also anti-missionary; in its main and great design, it was on the part of its leaders a political movement, having for its object the restoration of the government to a Mohammedan dynasty.

If we do not see the beginning of the great conflict between Christianity and Hinduism, so far as men are concerned, we do nevertheless see that conflict, commenced long ago, and now going with fearful earnestness to its end. We recognize in these wonderful and terrible events a deeper and a darker agency than that of man. We see the presence of the Great Adversary, permitted in the wise purposes of God to triumph, though but for a short time. He succeeded once in making enemies to act as friends when the Lord of life was to be crucified; he has again persuaded those who were enemies to act together; Brahmans and Maulavis have acted in concert, not seeing in their blind passions that their success would lead but to the clashing of irreconcilable elements. In the event of their success, the Evil One doubtless rejoiced in hoping that it would not be long before the land would again mourn over its slaughtered inhabitants as in ancient days; he no doubt believed that the Hindu myriads, remembering the

70,000 lives that were sacrificed on a single day by a Moghul emperor, when the Broadway of Delhi was deep in human blood, would rise in their might and sweep away the followers of the False Prophet. All this was foreseen by the great enemy, and his policy looked to the triumph of Paganism. We see then in these events the great conflict between the Prince of Darkness and Immanuel, the issue publicly joined for supremacy among the millions of the East. Already is the Evil One put to the worst, and the triumphs of the gospel will henceforth be peaceful and assured.

The Christian Church should humbly accept the severe discipline of these events. How have they rebuked her apathy to the conversion of this vast body of heathens! Her martyred sons and daughters now plead with her to arise in her Saviour's spirit and strength, to lean no longer on any arm of flesh—not even on the power of a noble Protestant government, and to enter with true earnestness on the work set before her. It is for larger efforts, for a holier service, for greater success than ever before, that the Sepoy Revolt speaks to the Missionary Church. The land was open before, but there were great obstacles to be overcome. The land is still open, and the obstacles are to be soon taken out of the way. Soon will Islamism and Brahmanism be seen lying like Dagon before the ark of God; these two main native barriers will be prostrated. The foreign barrier, the irreligious policy of the government, must also give way before the public opinion of Christian England. And a field more inviting than ever before will be spread before our Missionary Boards; a louder call than ever before will be heard for labourers to be sent into the harvest.

A few months ago the Hindu Sepoys were almost unknown to many of the members of our churches; but God has employed them, and overruled their awful crimes, to call forth an extraordinary interest in the Missions of our Church in India. Those missions were all in the provinces that have been desolated by this revolt. They were larger in extent than the missions of sister Churches. They were the first missions in those regions that were formed on a somewhat ex-

tended scale. They have been marked by signal providences from the beginning. They have received the special seal of the approval of God in the work of the Holy Spirit—in souls converted, sanctified, and received into glory; in converts still living, some of whom have been tried, and have kept the faith in the midst of awful perils; and in the grace given to our missionary brethren in the terrible scenes through which God has called them to pass. We call to mind the noble testimony of Mrs. Freeman, one of our Christian sisters, as one worthy of the best age of the martyrs; and we trust it was the feeling of all the missionaries of our Church. In immediate sight of appalling danger, she was enabled to write these ever memorable words: “Our little church and ourselves will be the first attacked; but we are in God’s hands, and we know that he reigns. We have no place to flee to for shelter, but under the covert of his wings, and there we are safe. Not but he may suffer our bodies to be slain; and if he does, we know he has wise reasons for it. I sometimes think our deaths may do more good than we could do in all our lives; if so, his will be done. Should I be called to lay down my life, do not grieve, dear sisters, that I came here; for most joyfully will I die for him who laid down his life for me.” God be praised for this testimony! Let the same spirit pervade not only the missionary body, but the churches at home, and these missions, restored and enlarged, will become like fountains of living water in a desert land. Our English brethren have under consideration the proposal to erect Memorial Churches at Delhi and Cawnpore, and all Christians in every land will sympathize with the object. We could fervently wish to see also a Memorial Mission Station founded by our Church at Bithoor. It would be a memorial of our beloved brethren, a witness to the forgiving and benevolent spirit of our religion, and a sacred means of making known its blessings to them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 020 731 987 9